DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 304 720 CS 506 550

AUTHOR Desjardins, Linda A.
TITLE Self-Evaluation and Pre-Speech Planning: A Strategy for Sharing Responsibility for Progress in the Speech Class.
PUB DATE 88
NOTE 9p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Higher Education; Public Speaking; Secondary Education; *Self Evaluation (Individuals); *Speech Improvement; *Speech Instruction; Teacher Developed Materials; Teaching Methods; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

Speech class teachers can implement a pre- and post-speech strategy, using pre-speech and self-evaluation forms, to help students become active in directing their own progress, and acknowledge their own accomplishments. Every speech is tape-recorded in class. Students listen to their speeches later and fill in the self-evaluation form, which asks them to identify strengths and note improvements, list specific areas in which they would like to improve, and evaluate speech content. The pre-speech plan is submitted on the date of the next speech. In it, students record their specific speech purpose in a sentence, list the main points they will cover, and identify a specific goal for improvement. While this procedure is geared for auditory assessments, it can easily be used with videotape and include not only oral improvement, but physical improvement as well. (Two figures are included.) (SR)

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"Self-Evaluation and Pre-Speech Planning: A Strategy for Sharing Responsibility for Progress in the Speech Class"

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Linda A. Desjardins
Instructor,
Northern Essex Community College

Communications Department
Spring, 1988

CS506550

Linda A. Desjardins is an instructor at Northern Essex Community College in Haverhill, MA. She teaches writing, literature, film and speech in the Communications Department there and has also taught at Northeastern University and Rivier College.

"Self-Evaluation and Pre-Speech Planning: A Strategy for Sharing Responsibility for Progress in the Speech Class"

Introduction

For many semesters, my speech class had a consistent format: I'd lecture, assign a speech, give guidelines as to expectations, listen to the speeches, and then provide a written evaluation of each student's presentation. I came to realize, however, my students relied too heavily on my evaluation of their speech presentations for their own assessment of their skills. Their self-images seemed to rise and fall with my positive and critical comments regarding their speeches. Their next speaking effort would reflect an attempt to work on my identified "negatives," trying therefore to please me. I was the sculptor, they my clay. This is not a healthy scenario. A positive self-image and sense of being able to direct their own progress are key ingredients in becoming good public speakers. A feeling of confidence about their speaking abilities encourages students to try harder, to experiment, to grow. Although I tried to accentuate the positives as well as suggest areas for improvements, the students still tended to focus only on the negatives, and this did nothing to foster strong self-images. Their speech modifications, undertaken to placate me, did nothing to promote a feeling of their being participants in a progress plan. To get my students to take a more active role in developing their own communication skills, I implemented a pre- and post-speech strategy with the use of pre-speech and self-evaluation forms. Their diligent completion of

these forms has been successful in enabling students to identify for themselves those areas which they would like to improve. A sample of each form, Figure One and Figure Two, are provided.

Cassette Recording

In order to implement this self-evaluation and pre-speech strategy, students are required to record every speech. This is done right in class with one student assigned to be the tape handler each session. After class, students listen to their speeches in privacy, if so desired, and fill-in a self-evaluation form.

Self-Evaluation Form, Figure One

Figure One asks the students to identify their strengths and note any improvements since their last speech. Addressing these areas helps build their self images by focusing on what the students are doing right. Next, they must list specific areas in which they would like to improve. Setting goals gives direction to their next speech effort and allows the students to shape their own progress.

By becoming actively involved in their own speech destinies and working toward accomplishing their own objectives, the students see they have a say in their education and are not merely my pawns. Their self-confidence, so important to becoming strong public speakers, is enhanced. There is also space on the form to address speech content and to give any additional commentary.

The use of cassette tapes and the self-evaluation form forces students to listen to themselves carefully and objectively to assess their performance, determine what progress has been made and identify what changes they would like to make in their next speaking assignment. It allows them to share responsibility for their own speech improvement. I do not return my evaluation form to the students until they have filled out their assessments completely. I do this to avoid having them listen to themselves defensively or listen only to hear whether they agree or disagree with me.

Pre-Speech Plan, Figure Two

After the students have completed the self-evaluation forms, the pre-speech plan, Figure Two, is addressed. This plan is submitted on the date of the next speech. First, the students record their specific speech purpose, phrased in a sentence. Requiring a sentence format helps them to clearly focus their intentions. Next, they list the main points they plan to cover which helps them to organize the speech content. Finally, students must identify a specific goal for improvement. This last item is the crucial one here: it is through goal-setting that the students shape their own progress. The goals are usually an outgrowth of the previous speech's "area to improve" section. To keep the goals specific, the form also asks students to identify how they will recognize whether they have attained their goal: saying "I want to speak more clearly" will not suffice. The goal must be nailed down in measurable terms, as in "I will pronounce all

'ing' endings and say 'to' rather than 'ta'." With specific, recognizable goals in mind, the students have something to listen for in their next speech recording, helping formulate their next self evaluation.

Conclusion

While the procedure described is geared for auditory assessments, it can easily be used with videotape and include not only oral improvements, but physical ones as well. Whether the process is used with audio or videotape, the self-evaluation and speech-plan forms help students become active in their own speech progress, acknowledge their accomplishments, and direct their improvements. While they still get feedback from me, the impact my impressions have on their self-images and their need to feel a joint responsibility for their improvement is put in a healthier perspective, as it should be.

SELF EVALUATION

NAME:

SPEECH BEING EVALUATED:

DELIVERY

STRENGTHS:

IMPROVEMENTS NOTED:

AREA(S) TO IMPROVE:

CONTENT (Check what you feel is appropriate)

	Strong	Fair	Weak
INTRO.			
SUPPORT			
TIMING			

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Figure One

SPEECH PLAN

NAME:

TOPIC:

SPECIFIC PURPOSE - PHRASED IN A SENTENCE:

MAIN POINTS:

SPECIFIC GOAL FOR IMPROVEMENT:

HOW THIS GOAL WILL BE RECOGNIZED OR MEASURED:

Figure Two